

Wonderful Stories of Oz

By L. Frank Baum

Home Again

The Wizard had invented a machine to blow huge soap bubbles, as big as balloons, and this machine was hidden under the platform so that only the rim of the big clay pipe to produce the bubbles showed above the flooring. The tank of soap, and the air pumps to inflate the bubbles, were out of sight beneath, so that when the bubbles began to grow upon the floor of the platform it really seemed like magic to the people of Oz, who knew nothing about even the common soap bubbles that our children blow with a penny clay pipe and a basin of soap and water.

The Wizard had invented another thing. Usually soap bubbles are frail and burst easily, lasting only a few moments as they float in the air; but the Wizard added a sort of glue to his soap, and his bubbles were as tough as leather, and so as the glue dried rapidly when exposed to the air, the Wizard's bubbles were strong enough to float for hours without breaking.

He began by blowing—by means of his machinery and air pumps—several large bubbles which he allowed to float upward into the sky, where the sunshine fell upon them and gave them iridescent hues that were most beautiful. This aroused much wonder and delight, because it was a new amusement to everyone present—except perhaps Dorothy and Button-Bright, and even they had never seen such big, strong bubbles before.

The Wizard then blew a bunch of small bubbles and after a while a big bubble around them so they were left in the center of it; then he allowed the whole mass of pretty globes to float into air and disappear in the far-distant sky.

"That is really fine," declared Santa Claus, who loved toys and pretty things. "I think, Mr. Wizard, I shall have you blow a bubble around me, then I can float away home and see the country spread out beneath me as I travel. There isn't a spot on earth that I haven't visited, but I usually go in the night time, riding behind my swift reindeer. Here is a good chance to observe the country by daylight while I am riding slowly and at my ease."

"Do you think you will be able to guide the bubble?" asked the Wizard. "Oh, yes, I can steer a bubble," said Santa Claus. "You blow the bubble, with me inside of it, and I'll be sure to get home in safety." "Please send me home in a bubble, too," begged the Queen of Merryland. "Very well, madam; you shall try," said the Wizard, quickly floating out of sight.

"That's a very nice way to travel," said Princess Fluff. "I'd like to go home in a bubble, too." So the Wizard blew a big bubble around Princess Fluff, and another around King Bud, her brother, and a third around Queen Zen. Then these three bubbles had floated into the sky and were floating off in a group in the direction of the kingdom of Noland.

The success of these ventures induced the other guests from foreign lands to undertake a journey in bubbles, so the Wizard put them one by one inside his bubbles, and Santa Claus directed the way they should go, because he knew exactly where everybody lived.



The Wizard Blew a Bubble Around Santa Claus.

Finally Button-Bright said:

"I want to go home, too."

"Why, so you shall," cried Santa

"for I'm sure your father and mother will be glad to see you again. Mr.

Wizard, blow a bubble around me, and I'll agree to send him home to his family as safe as a feather."

"I'm sorry," said Dorothy, with a

sigh, for she was fond of her little

comrade, "but papa's best for But-

ton-Bright to get home, 'cause his folks must be worrying just dreadful."

She kissed the boy, and Santa Claus

him, too, and all the others waved

their hands and said good-bye and

wished him a pleasant journey.

"Are you glad to leave us, dear?"

asked Dorothy, a little wistfully.

"Don't know," said Button-Bright.

He sat down cross-legged on the plat-

form, with his sailor hat tipped back

on his head, and the Wizard blew a

beautiful bubble all around him.

A minute later it had mounted into

the sky, sailing toward the west, and

the last they saw of Button-Bright

was still sitting in the middle of the

whirling globe and waving his sailor hat

at those below.

"Will you ride in a bubble, or shall

I send you and Toto home by means of

the Magic Belt?" the Princess asked

Dorothy.

"Guess I'll use the Belt," replied the

little girl. "I'm sort of 'fraid of those

bubbles."

"How now?" said Toto approvingly.

He loved to bark at the bubbles as they

sailed away, but he didn't care to ride

in one.

Santa Claus decided to go next. He

thanked Ozma for her hospitality and

wished her many happy returns of the

day. Then the Wizard blew a bubble

around his chubby little body and

smaller bubble around each of his eyes

and knooks.

As the kind and generous friend of

children mounted into the air the people

all cheered at the top of their

voices, for they loved Santa Claus dearly;

and the little man heard them

through the walls of the bubble and

waved his hands in return as he smiled

down upon them. The band played

bravely while everyone watched the

bubble until it was completely out of

sight.

"How 'bout you, Polly?" Dorothy

asked her friend. "Are you 'fraid of

bubbles, too?"

"No," answered Polychrome, smiling;

"but Santa Claus promised to speak to

my father as he passed through the

sky. So perhaps I shall get home an

easier way."

Indeed, the little maid had scarcely

made her speech when a sudden radi-

ance filled the air, and while the peo-

ple looked on in wonder the end of a

gorgeous rainbow settled down upon

the platform.

With a glad cry the rainbow's Daugh-

ter sprang from her seat and danced

along the curve of the bow, mounting

gradually upward, while the folds of

her gauzy gown whirled and floated

around her like a cloud and blended

with the colors of the rainbow itself.

"Good-bye, Ozma! Good-bye, Doroth-

ey!" cried a voice they knew belonged

to Polychrome, but now the little maid-

ens form had melted wholly into the

rainbow, and their eyes could no longer

see her.

Suddenly the end of the rainbow lifted

and its colors slowly faded like a

mist before a breeze. Dorothy sighed

deeply and turned to Ozma.

"I'm sorry to lose Polly," she said;

"but I guess she's better off with her

father, 'cause even the Land of Oz

couldn't be like home to a cloud fairy."

"No, indeed," replied the Princess;

"but it has been delightful for us to

know Polychrome for a little while, and

who knows?—perhaps we may meet

the Rainbow's Daughter again, some

day."

The entertainment being now ended,

all left the pavilion and formed their

gay procession back to the Emerald

City again. Of Dorothy's recent trav-

eling companions only Toto and the

shaggy man remained, and Ozma had

decided to allow the latter to live in

the city for a time at least. If he proved

honest and true she promised to let

him live there always, and the shaggy

man was anxious to earn this re-

ward.

They had a nice quiet dinner together

and passed a pleasant evening with the

Scarcecrow, the Tin Woodman, Tik-Tok

and the Yellow Hen for company.

When Dorothy bade them good-night

she kissed them all good-bye at the

same time. For Ozma had agreed that

while Dorothy slept she and Toto

should be transported by means of the

Magic Belt to her own little bed in

the Kansas farmhouse, and the little

girl laughed as she thought how aston-

ished she Henry and Em would be

when she came down to breakfast

with them next morning.

Quite content to have had so pleasant

an adventure, and a little tired by all

the day's scenes, Dorothy clasped Toto

in her arms and lay down upon the

pretty white bed in her room in Ozma's

royal palace.

Presently she was sound asleep, and

when she woke, Dorothy was lying in

Kansas just like any other little girl!

(But next week you shall hear of

Dorothy's new adventures. It begins

with a story called "How the Nome

King Became Angry."—The Editor.)

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Writer Of Many English Books Dies

BATH, England, Oct. 7.—The death is announced of C. N. Williamson, well known novelist.

Charles Norris Williamson, journalist and author, gained wide popularity as a writer of stories in which automobiles played a prominent part. Conjointly with his wife, Alice Muriel Williamson, he wrote, among other tales:

"The Lightning Conductor," "The Princess Passes," "My Friend the Chauffeur," "Scarlet Runner," and "The Motor Maid."

Mr. Williamson was a scientist and engineer and was for eight years on the editorial staff of the Graphic. He published "The Life of Thomas Carlyle" in two volumes in 1881. Mr. Williamson was born in Livingston Manor house, on the Hudson, near Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

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Argentine Officials To Avoid Duello

BUENOS AIRES, Oct. 7.—Honorio Pueyrredon, Argentine foreign minister, and Benito Villanueva, president of the senate, will not fight a duel, as they announced they would last week. Their records have submitted points at issue to Ernesto Bosch, former Argentine minister to France, who, as arbitrator, has decided it would establish a bad precedent for officials to seek a solution by arms of differences originating in the discharge of their functions.

Proposals that the matter be arbitrated were accepted. It is understood President Irigoyen will not accept the foreign minister's resignation, which was tendered so that he could be free to fight the proposed duel.

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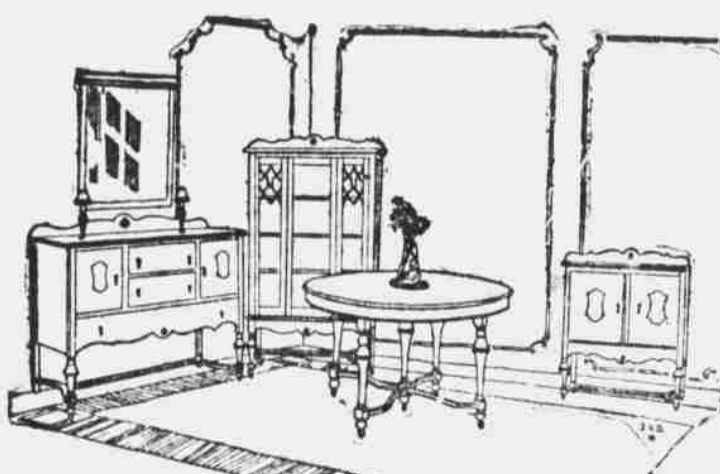
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U. S. POPULATION TO BE ANNOUNCED

Alabama Passes Tennessee. South Carolina and Wyoming Grow.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7.—The population of the United States, exclusive of its outlying possessions, will be announced at 4 p. m. today, the census bureau announced.

Alabama, South Carolina and Wyoming made substantial gains in population during the last ten years, while Nevada, the smallest state in the union in point of population, became the third state to show a decrease.

The census bureau announced today that Alabama has a population of 3,347,295, an increase of 209,202, or 6.3 per cent over 1910. The state thus passed Tennessee in the standing of the states.

South Carolina has a population of 1,683,662, which is 168,262, or 11.1 per cent greater than the 1910 figure. The state, however, fell short of its relative growth in 1910 by 2 per cent.

Wyoming, next to the least populous state, has a population of 194,492, which is an increase of 14,492, or 8.2 per cent compared with the thirteenth census. The state showed its second largest numerical growth, but its percentage increase was the lowest.

Nevada's population was announced at 77,402, a decrease of 4,468, or 5.5 per cent. It was the state's third population decline, the decade ended with 1890 showing it to have decreased 23.9 per cent and during the following ten years its loss was 19.6 per cent. The state, however, more than made up its first two losses during the decade 1900 to 1910 when it increased 92.4 per cent.

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